

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the consideration given the present application.

By this amendment, claims 5, 6, 8, 14, 15 and 20-23 are canceled, without prejudice to presenting them in a continuing Application. As a result of these claim amendments, claims 7, 12, 19 and 24 are pending in the present application. Claims 7, 19 and 24 are independent.

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Objection to the Specification

The Advisory Action withdrew the previous objection to the specification. Accordingly, the objection is moot.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second paragraph

The Advisory Action withdrew the rejection of claims 5-8, 12, 14, 15 and 19-24 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Accordingly, this rejection is moot.

Rejection of claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 5, 6, 8, 14, 15 and 20-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,903,531 to Satoh et al (hereinafter, "Satoh"). This rejection is respectfully traversed as moot in view of the cancellation of claims 5, 6, 8, 14, 15 and 20-23.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 7, 12, 19 and 24 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter and, by this Amendment, have re-written claims 7, 19 and 24 in independent form. Claim 12 depends from claim 7 and is proper in its dependent form.

Entry of Amendments

Applicants respectfully submit that it is proper to enter this Amendment, because it clearly places the Application in condition for Allowance.

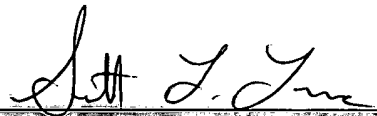
Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons and in view of the above clarifying amendments, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the objections and rejections of record, including the objection to claims 7, 12, 19 and 24, and earnestly solicits an early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and further replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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